



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
CHARLOTTE-DESOTO BUILDING INDUSTRY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

Charlotte County Community Development, BCS Conference Room
18400 Murdock Circle
Port Charlotte, Florida 33948

April 29, 2016

This was the regular monthly meeting of the Charlotte-Desoto Building Industry Oversight Committee.

Committee Members Present:

Peter Coccaro
Geoff Lorah

Committee Members Present:

Kevin Koch
T.J. Thornberry

County Staff Present:

Ben Bailey
Claire Jubb
Kelly Shoemaker
Commissioner Truex

County Staff Present:

Maggie Horton
Michelle Roman
Erin Mullen-Travis

Visitors Attending:

Donna Barrett
Pat Lewis

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- Kevin Koch, President CDBIA, AA Disaster Restoration called the meeting to order at 8:10 am.

2. ROLL CALL:

- Sign-in

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- March 25, 2016 Minutes approved unanimously.

4. CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS:

- Kevin Koch - Approximately eight mansions were shut down while being built without a license in Sarasota County, as reported in the Sarasota Herald. This article brought to mind Charlotte County's program, where sub-contractors are notified when they are listed on a permit.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

- Claire Jubb – The Babcock Ranch Grande Reveal was fantastic; the week before we met with the initial single family home contractors and had a great reception. We are piloting a one hundred percent electronic permitting process with them. Babcock has their own minimal landscaping, environmental and zoning standards; basically there is only building review and we are encouraging them to use masterplans. Within the permit types, whichever masterplan they select will bring up a customized list of options; there should be a two to three day permitting time. If this works for them, there is no reason it shouldn't work for anyone else.
- Donna Barrett – You've met with the builders, have they narrowed the list down.
- Claire Jubb – There are six builders; only one (Stock Construction) has had previous interaction with Charlotte County. Babcock will have their initial sixteen (16) model permits to us by July and single family home permits will be out towards the end of the year. We meet monthly with the Babcock team and have a good working relationship with them. We've been asked to reach out to them if we have any problems at all; they want to be a good neighbor with the residents in the area. Kitson & Partners is building the commercial; the Discovery Center is the first aspect of that. We expect everything around town square to come in, such as an educational building, medical facility and restaurants. Ultimately, they're looking at six million sq. ft. of commercial. The initial phase, I believe is 60,000 sq. ft. In terms of side work, it's quite incredible what they have done. The roads are going in and being paved, as well as curbing. They are working on the utilities and solar plans with 30,000 solar panels, each one being tied down by hand and six (6) miles of wiring.
- Kevin Koch – I am impressed in that, they really want to be a part of the community and do things right.
- Claire Jubb – They are focusing on communication with everyone. They flew their engineer down to speak with us about the flood zone because it is in a D Zone.
- TJ Thornberry – Are all the foundations elevated?
- Claire Jubb – As they're digging the lakes, they are using that as their fill which is part of the district permit. Most of the area is a D designation (undesignated), which means the home owners would basically pay the maximum amount of flood insurance. They are going through the conditional map amendment and then the map provision process to establish flood zones and elevations. The majority of the area will probably be an X zone. They have had to put weirs in at the very top end of their property for some of the storm water projects which controls the water flow from coming down into the town; this is also restoring wetlands. You can see, where the weirs have been in for six to eight months the wetlands are starting to come back. They are doing a lot of restoration and fixing some of the flooding issues on State Road 31. We have made the commitment to have one or two inspectors in Babcock

once they get to a certain level of permitting. We are trying to make sure we can handle this project without effecting anything else; that is a priority.

- Peter Coccaro – Is it cost effective for the building department to hire people or set up satellite offices and have our service suffer? Could we hire an independent inspecting firm to handle this?
- Claire Jubb – We're hoping to handle it with the revenue that we receive from Babcock. Whenever you talk about private providers, we as a department lose a little control. One of our goals is to develop a relationship with Babcock so they won't feel the need to go to a private provider and they will want to use the county. This is one reason we are streamlining the process, the more we can streamline the quicker we can move everything, so it won't have an impact on everyone else. We are going to the BCC in the end of May to request additional staffing, five initially for the building department.
- Donna Barrett – Will the request for additional staff include someone dedicated to Babcock or is that just because building is up.
- Claire Jubb - It will bring us to full staffing plus give us some additional, this will get us there initially. We also want to make sure we have positions available as people apply.
- Kelly Shoemaker – We will be taking a real strategic look at what positions are needed.
- Donna Barrett – I did get a large inactive file; there may be a minimal cost to list on the Florida Home Builders Association website.
- Claire Jubb – If you can get me that file, we can take a look at it.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Accela:

- Claire Jubb – Emails are going out to contractors and sub-contractors; anytime a contractor is added to a permit they are notified by email. We are working on getting zoning type permits online. We managed to do an upgrade in our development environment and we are testing that as well. We are moving forward.
- T.J. Thornberry – Accela is not communicating with CCU. When I call in or order finals and I include the meter installation inspection, Accela doesn't order the final for

CCU. I have to call CCU and order the inspection and they take two to three days. Is there any way we can tie that in with CCU procedurally?

- Claire Jubb - We will get with Gary to see what is happening, it may be a training issue.
- T.J. Thornberry - Accela only lets you schedule that on the computer with the other finals. If it is a two to three day inspection with CCU, I would like to do that when the sod goes in and get it out of the way.
- Claire Jubb – We can change that.
- Question asked - Are we getting pass and fail inspections through Accela?
- Claire Jubb – Yes, email notification is sent for passed and failed inspections, when the permit is ready to pick up, when it's final, ready to expire and when there is a CO. With the next version we will be able to send text notifications. In the past we have had to call or fax FPL and notify them that inspections have passed. Now, as soon as the inspection is passed an email notification is sent directly to FPL.

b. Financials:

- Michelle Roman – For the month of March, our revenues totaled \$420,506. Expenditure were \$310,955 which resulted in a profit of \$109,551 for the month. YTD for FY16 revenues total \$2,071,358 while expenditures total \$1,780,638, resulting in an overall profit of \$290,720. This brings the reserves balance to \$2,947,455.
- Geoff Lorah - Scanning the percentages, overtime is double what was budgeted with half the year to go, which is certainly understandable under the circumstances. Everything else looks to be on track or better than planned.
- Discussion ensued as to credit card fees and it was stated Charlotte County does not charge a fee.
- Claire Jubb – When we had the discussion as to fee increase back in 2003-2004, we talked about it and decided to make it part of the permit.
- Pete Coccaro - The fees here are too light. I would rather see the fee be a little higher and instead of hiring three, hire six. We could afford to go up a little bit to have better service. That's something to talk about I think.
- Claire Jubb – In 2009-2010 we looked at raising the fees but the last time we raised them was in 2003-2004.

- Pete Coccaro – We’ve always talked about speed and service being important to contractors. We should be making a profit to be put into reserves; so that we can go for three to four years in a down market.
- T.J. Thornberry – I don’t see a problem with service other than natural resources and trees; I want to ask about staffing on that. The permits are coming out and I’m getting my inspections. Right now with the water and sewer connection fee increase and impact fees, I don’t want to add another dime regulatory wise to the cost of a single family home. I’m already having issues with appraisals.
- Claire Jubb – We do adjust the single family home fees based on the ICC Building Regulation data. As the valuation goes up you will see a small increase in fees but we haven’t touched the flat fee permits since 2003-2004.
- Ben Bailey – I think once we’re fully staffed and we see how things go with Babcock coming on we’ll have a better picture in the coming year.
- Commissioner Truex - How many openings do you have right now that you are trying to fill?
- Ben Bailey – We have an open Plans Examiner position and we’re interviewing next week for a Plumbing Inspector. Hopefully we will be posting a Structural and Electrical position next week.
- Discussion ensued as to applicants. Former employees and people from other jurisdictions have applied as the department is receiving increasingly more positive compliments for its professionalism.
- Commissioner Truex – At Babcock Ranch, because of the efforts of staff they can’t say enough good things about Charlotte County. I had a discussion with an architect last night who expressed that they would rather work in Charlotte County now, than anywhere else. That’s the difference, that’s what has changed. I wanted to bring that up at some point, accolades to the department.
- Claire Jubb – Ben has restructured how he is hiring inspectors, giving us more flexibility depending on their level of licensure.
- Ben Bailey – In this economy, as private providers are becoming busier and paying more, we’re starting to see employees from jurisdictions going to private employers.

c. Permitting:

- Claire Jubb – In March 2016 we issued 85 single family home permits which was a 24% increase over March 2015. Year to date we're up 36% for single family. All permits in general are up about 10% year to date. We're not seeing an increase in commercial yet. On the land development side we are seeing more plats coming through the site plan review process.
- T.J. Turnberry - Ten days for trees and natural resources?
- Claire Jubb - That ten days is typically absorbed within the permit. Natural Resources is semi electronic now, they are received and placed in a pending status while doing inspections. It is moving through the process; going to the building plans examiner at the same time as trees and natural resources. We're looking at eleven (11) to thirteen (13) business days currently for a single family home.

d. Staffing:

- Ben Bailey – We have hired a structural and mechanical inspector, plus a plumber that can do mechanical. Another inspector hired didn't work out but we are looking to make an offer next week; then we'll be coming online with a structural and electrical inspector.
- Claire Jubb – We're not hiring purely on licensing, we're looking for a good fit.
- Donna Barrett - How does one get certified in becoming an inspector and are there courses that we can help with on the educational side.
- Ben Bailey – Five years field experience and an affidavit is needed that clearly spells out an applicant's skills and involvement in the field. They do give credit for a college degree. Once approved by the Board, there is a Principals and Practice test on the laws and rules of Florida and a technical test. These tests are based on the ICC test. Trade Schools are a start; then they can get their hands on experience in the field.
- Kelly Shoemaker – We are also excited about the partnership with Western Michigan. Economic Development is already having the conversation about the skills we are lacking in our workforce as a community and what they can do to help that.
- Donna Barrett – We have had some meetings on this as well and the Tech Center is working on some changes.

- Ben Bailey – Sarasota County is still helping us on Tuesday's for another couple of weeks. We currently have three employees in the field and should be fine.
- Pete Cocco - Is there any way we could enhance the Plans Examiner position?
- Ben Bailey – Typically, jurisdictions pay more for a Plans Review positions.
- Claire Jubb – We have a range for the Plans Examiner position that goes up to approximately \$35.00 per hour but the bottom end of the range is very low. That's a conversation we might have with HR. We may have some opportunities to change it a little bit.
- T.J. Thornberry – Donna, an email went out yesterday about the CCU rate increase; in my opinion a notice needs to go out today to make sure the contractor's know that today is the last day. The presentation appeared to be only for line extensions but it's not. According to the CCU if we don't pay today for water and sewer it will go up \$2,440. I don't know how that got through. It was presented to us here, at the Chamber and at the Builders Association as strictly line extensions. I have three pending contracts that are in jeopardy, had I known about this I could have planned for it.
- Claire Jubb - For those of you who build in Englewood. The Englewood Fire District Impact Fee is going up; I believe that was sent out as well.
- Donna Barrett - Our CEO and Chief Lobbyist from the Florida Home Builders Association Rusty Patton is coming Tuesday and in June we'll have the classes back for the State Contractors License. Is it possible to get a list of people who have just received their license? The Southeast Builders Conference is giving a free pass to those who have just received their license in the past six months.
- Claire Jubb – We'll get the list to you.

e. General Discussion:

- There was no General Discussion

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There was no Public Comment

8. NEXT MEETING:

- Friday, May 27, 2016 @ 8:00 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 9:04 a.m.
 Meeting recorded and transcribed by Beth Scott.
 Approved at the May 27, 2016 BIOC Regular Meeting